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ISABEL McISAAC

TRIBUTES FROM SOME OF HER FRIENDS

Among the small group of women who came together in Chicago, at the time of the World's Fair, in 1893, to discuss nursing affairs, was Isabel McIsaac, an American-born woman, of Scotch parentage, then assistant superintendent at the Illinois Training School under Miss Dock. She was one of the younger women at that gathering and read a paper on The Benefits of Alumnae Associations, that at the Illinois Training School having been one of the first to be established. From that time on she was a conspicuous influence in all the progressive movements for which both the League and the American Nurses' Association have stood. Both when holding office and in the work of every committee of which she was a member, she rendered invaluable service. She had been president of both national societies and of the Federation of Nurses at the time of the International Congress in Buffalo.

She was not only interested in the JOURNAL and president of the JOURNAL Company during two periods, but she was one of its organizers and supporters during the earlier days, when she promoted its welfare among the graduates of her own school, so that they knew about it before it came into existence. During its first year she had charge of a department called Practical Points on Private Nursing, for which she gathered several articles each month, at that time no light task, as nurses had not become educated to the ideas of magazine writing.

So short a time had elapsed between the giving up of her duties as head of the Army Nurse Corps and her death that the same issue of the JOURNAL that carried to the nursing world the news of her passing, gave also her report for the previous month of the changes in the Army Nurse Corps, with her signature. This was characteristic of the finished and complete way in which her work was always done. This was as she would have wished. Her work in the Army Nurse Corps was only the culmination of a life-long love of country and true patriotism and, like the soldier she was, she died at her post.

So far as we have been able, in the short time that has passed since her death, we have asked some of those who had been associated with her in different ways, and who, we know, were specially near to her, to join with us in paying tribute to her life and work, covering different periods of time. There has been necessarily some duplication and we



ISABEL McISAAC

From a photograph taken just before giving up her official position at
the Illinois Training School.

appreciate the fact that we do not know the names of a great number of those who have loved her and who would like to join in such a memorial. We invite all those who would like to do so to send contributions to us to be used later.—[Ed.]

AS A PUPIL NURSE

Schools for nurses were little more than out of the experimental stage when Miss McIsaac and her sister entered the Illinois Training School for Nurses in June, 1886. Attractive in every way, they were a welcome addition, and soon had many warm friends. Enthusiastic and ambitious in work, ready for fun when the opportunity offered, and giving evidence of the best home training, we were not surprised when, as head nurses, both developed unusual executive ability.

Our class work was then rather "hit and miss," I presume the graded work was not really well started till the year I left. I recall that she learned easily and greedily.

Night duty was as hard for Miss McIsaac as it is for so many nurses, because she did not sleep well in the day. In later years she frequently spoke of the physical and nervous strain, and she was always most solicitous about the welfare of night nurses.

In her care of patients, she was attentive to the small wants that assume such exaggerated proportions to them. I remember one old man in a medical ward who, with a wise wag of his head, told the head nurse at the end of a hard night's duty for Miss McIsaac that "she could make the most kinds of drinks of any nurse he ever knew." He was not given to much speaking, and he considered this a great compliment. We, who knew the resources, agreed with him. She had wonderfully beautiful hands, and was very quick and deft in her work. She liked to take care of patients, and they liked to be cared for by her. Another patient I recall distinctly was in one of the surgical wards. He had been sick a long time, had a foecal fistula and was hard to take care of, although not unpleasant. Miss McIsaac had been "doing him up" each morning for some time, so that the work had become somewhat routine. One morning, however, there was an especially difficult time and a lot of extra work. When all was finished and the patient comfortable and refreshed, he looked up with moist eyes to thank her, and added, "I hope I may do as much for you, some time." Quicker than thought, she replied, "The Lord forbid!" and they both laughed heartily.

Early in her days as a pupil she was sick with inflammatory rheumatism, and about a year later the younger sister was alarmingly ill

for many weeks. It was then she learned what illness meant to the nurse and to her family. I remember distinctly the coming of their mother and how sweet and motherly she was; the days of anxiety and Miss McIsaac's positive stand for suitable care for her sister; her insistence upon caring for her, herself, and the indelible impression it left upon her, and upon us.

JESSIE BREEZE.

AS SUPERINTENDENT

A residence in the school of nine consecutive years, with steady progress in executive and teaching ability, made it logical that Miss McIsaac should be asked to become superintendent of her school when a vacancy occurred in the spring of 1895. She accepted reluctantly, as she was much attached to her work in the Presbyterian Hospital, where she had spent seven happy years, and "loved every stick, stone and brick in it," as I have heard her say so often. She understood the responsibilities and difficulties very well, and dreaded them.

It was at the time the three-year course was being introduced and much planning was required to be ready for it. The graduates were told of it through the alumnae association, and the pupil nurses were told in their classes, the seniors working out certain problems as part of their class work, so that they should have a better understanding of the advantages expected for the pupils and be ready to help the three-year pupils when they asked the natural questions about the lengthening of the course.

One of the first things accomplished was a more careful supervision of the nurses reporting sick; and quickly following this, very active steps were taken to prevent illness by more watchful attention to probationers and young nurses, class instruction in personal hygiene and certain elementary points in bacteriology. The results well repaid the time and effort spent.

The practical work in the care of patients was carefully outlined, with teaching of the details by head nurses, and strict watchfulness of each step by the assistants, both head nurses and assistants reporting to Miss McIsaac. In the markings for each year's work, practical work, for the first time, was credited, as was also conduct.

In the autumn of 1895 nursing demonstrations were begun, and most enthusiastically received by all; resulting in a noticeable improvement and uniformity of ward work. The teaching and supervision of ward work were elaborated and improved each year as changes and additions were made to the theoretical work.

The third year was full of interesting surprises. Speakers, outside the medical and nursing world, chiefly women who were doing work interesting to nurses from the human standpoint, addressed the seniors. Class work, necessitating visits to other institutions and to certain commercial places for the purpose of learning how foods are made ready for the market, some practical studies in housekeeping, and an opportunity, at the last, to learn something of administrative work, were some of the features. Her aim was to have the school, first of all, an educational institution, and everything was planned to contribute to the making of a well balanced nurse.

Wholesome fun was not forgotten; in fact, it was considered necessary. Originality and spontaneity were welcomed and encouraged in the belief that a family spirit should be maintained and that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Miss McIsaac had a delightful sense of humor, and could extract most entertaining things from the ordinarily commonplace, a most refreshing quality to those who were with her daily.

JESSIE BREEZE.

HER TRAINING-SCHOOL WORK

When the Illinois Training School was in its sixth year and working through the difficulties of early organization, Miss McIsaac made up a part of the record which states that there were "50 nurses and 3 probationers in the school." She entered the school June 5, 1886, under Mary E. Brown as superintendent and finished August 6, 1888, under Miss Hampton. She was appointed as Second Assistant to Miss Hampton the year of her graduation and was appointed First Assistant to Edith Draper in 1891. In April, 1895, she was appointed to act as superintendent, being the first graduate of the school to hold the position which she filled until her resignation in 1904. This gave her a term of sixteen years' executive work during a formative period in her own Alma Mater as well as in the whole nursing situation. Some of the results which we take for granted, as a part of the nursing profession, Miss McIsaac helped to grow or strangle.

In her early training, private duty in private homes was arranged for and the school started its Directory for Graduate Nurses. In 1888 and 1889, they moved into the then new nurses' home, and Miss Hampton resigned from this school to start the one in connection with the Johns Hopkins Hospital. The Illinois Training School for Nurses took over the nursing at the Presbyterian Hospital at this time and in 1891 and 1892 the Alumnae Association was formed. In 1893 there

were the nursing interests to be evolved and supervised in the Emergency Hospital at the World's Fair. The Crerar Fund, which has been explained so many times by Miss McIsaac, herself, was also worked out and furthered in 1895. The three-year course of instruction for the student nurses was planned and all students who entered after June, 1896, entered for three years. The size of the school increased from 75, in 1888, to about 150 in 1904. The curriculum was changed to meet the needs of the situation. The household planning for the increase of the family involved much time and energy. From 1889 through 1904, 703 received their certificates from this school and there is no way of measuring the direct influence of this one life, not only upon the 703 graduates, but also upon those who started to the same goal and fell by the wayside. The seal of her work is being handed down to the second and third generation in the nursing profession in all parts of the world. What can there be better than coming under the influence of such a woman of high ideals and attainments as our Miss McIsaac?

MARY C. WHEELER.

HER VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

January 9, 1858–September 21, 1914

Thousands of nurses at home and abroad were shocked to learn of Miss McIsaac's death after a brief three weeks' bed-ridden illness, but those nearest her knew she should have given up long before. This only emphasizes her remarkable industry and devotion to duty.

Some one has said that there is nothing more beautiful than the life of an honest, earnest, conscientious nurse, and this has been exemplified in the lives of such nurses as Florence Nightingale, Mrs. Robb, and scores of others including our own Miss McIsaac. She had nearly all her training under Isabel Hampton; between them were pleasant professional and social relations, continued until Mrs. Robb's death, four and a half years ago.

In all she gave eighteen years of her life to the school, two in training, seven as assistant, and nine as superintendent. Her activities were not limited to the school, for the alumnae association received a full share of her thought and time. It was largely through her efforts that it was organized and she was its first president.

She was one of the founders of the *American Journal of Nursing*, and always took a leading part in all conventions and meetings of nurses.

After leaving the school her work as Interstate Secretary brought her into touch with nurses all over the country and resulted in increased enthusiasm and a general stimulus to nursing affairs.

She leaves a legacy to all nurses in the books she wrote on various subjects, in which are reflected many of her chief characteristics. Her clear intellect, her marked executive ability, her versatility, combined to make her an unusual woman. Possessed of untiring energy, staying powers, progressive ideas, she went from one position to another, all of which she filled most successfully. She was a faithful teacher, a wise counsellor, a peerless leader. Having the courage of her convictions, she knew no such word as fail and firmly stood for any cause which she espoused.

Her last service was as superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps, having been appointed in April 1912, and she remained at her post with true soldierly faithfulness till the last.

IDORA ROSE SCROGGS.

AS AN INFLUENCE WITH HER NURSES

In looking back over the years spent in the training school under Miss McIsaac's direction, the characteristics which stand out most clearly are her intolerance of sham or pretense and her aversion to display of any kind. These, with her insistence upon thoroughness in class-room and in hospital ward, were perhaps the first to impress the pupil nurse. Later, when added experience and responsibility brought the pupil into closer relationship with her the young nurse was impressed by her executive ability, power of organization and knowledge of human nature. She had an unusual understanding of the fitness of her pupils for certain lines of work and rarely made a mistake in advising the senior nurse which branch of nursing to choose.

She also realized that her nurses needed relaxation and recreation after the day's work in the hospital and many times when she herself, doubtless, needed rest, she instructed the nurses to "roll back the rugs" and played waltzes and other dances for them until even the last probationer forgot her homesickness.

One lesson she taught her nurses, both pupils and graduates, and taught more by example than by precept, was the duty the nurse owes to her profession as a whole. Busy as she always was, she never failed to respond to a call for help from any nursing organization or interest, whether local or national, even when, as in the fight for state registration, she sacrificed her own feelings and preferences. She disliked publicity and shrank from the associations which a legislative campaign necessitated but, realizing that the time had arrived for nurses to enter the arena of public affairs, she put self aside and took an active part in the first fight for registration in Illinois. Her pupils have many things for which to thank her but none greater than this

belief that our profession is not a matter of one school or one city, but is as broad as humanity itself.

The older graduates of the school who were her first pupils have many pleasant memories of her cherished throughout the years. Her womanly dignity in the class room brought out the best in each pupil; no one recognized or appreciated good work more quickly. She never expected the impossible of any one, but she did expect and demand the very best that was in each one. The conscientious, pains-taking, interested nurse always found a sympathetic cord in her heart and when relations ripened into friendship, that friendship was held as a priceless gift.

Miss McIsaac had those qualities found in every true woman and so essential to the good nurse, the love of home and the practical things of home-making.

HELEN W. KELLY.

AS INTER-STATE SECRETARY

Miss McIsaac was elected interstate secretary at the meeting of the Associated Alumnae held in New York City in 1910. The object of having an interstate secretary, as she says in her report the following year, was to bring the nurses of the country together, to make them realize that they are a tremendous power and to work out the great problems before them. She was sent out by the two national associations and the JOURNAL. The office involved much correspondence, but for two winters she travelled about the country, speaking to state, county, city and alumnae associations, to groups of hospital superintendents and to groups of pupil nurses. No distance was too great for her to travel and no group too small to address if she were wanted and could be helpful. The talks were chiefly about our organizations, their value to us and our duty to them. Just as she made each nurse feel that she, individually, was of great importance to her Association, so she pointed out the importance of each organization, however small, to the larger organizations. She spoke also in behalf of the JOURNAL and of the Red Cross work, setting for the Red Cross the high standard of having not one undesirable woman among its members.

Her visits to the far west were especially appreciated. It is a long trip to the east and middle west and comparatively few of us can attend the national conventions, so we feel the need of the inspiration of a strong personality such as Miss McIsaac had.

It was not easy work, this travelling about, making connections with trains at all hours, losing sleep and meals, but she failed only twice to

keep her appointments and then it was because of delayed trains, not for any fault of her own. For all of this, with characteristic modesty, she gave credit in her report to the presidents and the secretaries of the associations addressed. Whatever was accomplished in her trip, she must have kindled in the hearts of all earnest nurses with whom she came in contact great desire to make their work count and to do their duty to their profession as she pointed it out.

It may not be out of place for me to speak, in connection with Miss McIsaac's trip to the Pacific Coast, of the two weeks she spent in Pasadena, where she took a much-needed holiday in connection with her work among the many nurses who had been her pupils and who now live in southern California. Hardly a day passed without a reunion of some sort and it was such a privilege to know her in this more intimate way. The memory of those two weeks is a delightful one, indeed, and we are grateful that we could do her honor and show our appreciation of her worth. Her influence upon our lives and our work will live with us always.

CLARA SANFORD LOCKWOOD.

AS FRIEND AND ADVISER

Her name, fortunately, needs no commemoration of ours; she that bore it survived to see it crowned with unenvied honors. Co-workers and nurses everywhere knew her supreme abilities as an organizer and teacher, but to me has been given the privilege to endeavor to set forth her peculiar merits, which live in the recollection of those fortunate pupils, benefitted and blessed, who claim her their adviser. It would be fitting that a more able pen record our gratitude and love for such as she, alive to every one's question, with information at every one's command. At present it remains for one of her least talented to say how she inspired her to attempt to guide others.

It was not brilliancy but earnestness of purpose to which she appealed. She had in her character the utmost abhorrence for all sort of sham and pretensions, and by her womanly plainness, direct language and deportment, created ideals in her followers which had to bear fruit. Those near to her in executive work will concede that any thing more candid, more scrupulously loving of justice, than all her methods proved her to be, never was known. She had a prodigious memory, aided by the faculty of rejecting instinctively whatever was worthless or immaterial, a blessed gift for one who must judge impartially. Hers was a nature cast in the finest mold, always a womanly leader of women, beloved and honored.

In contemplating the good and precious influences which emanate from a life like hers, may we not make grateful acknowledgment, knowing that we are lifted into a higher atmosphere, encouraged and bettered. Though we may never hope to equal her, may we at least try to be worthy of her, in a measure, imitate her if we can, and then pass on the precious heritage.

I had the great happiness of knowing Miss McIsaac for many years in the intercourse of private life and I will take upon me to bear a testimony, in which all who had that gratification will join me, that they who only knew her public merit, knew only half her worth.

LILA F. PICKHARDT.

IN ORGANIZATION LIFE

Gone to a well-earned rest is this woman to whom the nursing world looked upward as to guiding star. Her light went not out by night, clouds never wholly obscured its beams, whether there was harmony or contention the glow symbolic of clearness, exactness, steadfastness, and fairness in business or friendship was still there.

Who shall estimate the value of her business policies in the management of the nurses' own JOURNAL? Conscious always of its worth to those whom it essayed to serve and jealous of its repute among publications, her efforts were directed as the president of its board to a precision that gave it power through stability.

In leading a body of nurses through the stress of one of the great annual conventions her graciousness was most evident and effective. As a presiding officer, whether in committee or national assembly, her equal was rarely seen and her superior was not known. A spirit of fairness and dignity pervaded all transactions and formed a bond of union between rostrum and floor that gave added strength and confidence alike to amateur and professional.

As interstate secretary for the American Nurses' Association she became acquainted with nurses in all parts of the land and had a knowledge of their accomplishments and their needs far in excess of that possessed by any other woman; she carried to them, even in the most remote places, messages of cheer and inspiration. Naturally her friendship was to them an abiding and propitious attachment to which their sense of loss must be in direct proportion.

Her work as superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps is not very well known by nurses outside that great body, excepting that it was characterized by the same faithfulness and zeal that marked all other phases of her activities.

Her friendship and sympathetic understanding was the source of

much of her power with her colleagues. It gave her the ability to teach beginners the best way of doing business or work and it bound them to her forever. It gave her a sense of humor that was often a saving grace and that put such a fine point upon her pen when she wrote *A New Cranford* as to make that work one of the classics. It showed her the most appealing way to the nurses' hearts and proved her to be a sensitive and tender woman when she wrote for the JOURNAL with lasting impression, what is now a solemn benediction regarding the watchers of the night:

Of all the lonely watchers of the night,—sailors, sentries, light-keepers, and shepherds,—none keep the solitary, anxious watch of the night nurse and the watching mother. There has never been anything quite like it since the world began, and no woman ever goes through it, who does not, all the rest of her life, carry a shadowy remote corner in her mind and heart, into which no one else may enter, nor does she ever look out into the night at a late hour and alone, that she does not think of those solitary watchers, in the great hospitals, in quiet city homes, in cottages and tenements, in remote villages and on lonely farms, and with a throb of sympathy pray for their guidance and safety.

MARY M. RIDDLE.

OFF DUTY

I have heard Miss McIsaac say that she could forget her work while off duty and not worry over it. She was always ready to join in or give to others a good time and she would get more out of it than any one I ever knew, be it a lecture, a musicale, a trip or a picnic. I had the pleasure of going to the seashore with her for a few days and to the mountains, in her first visit to California. She was never tired but interested in everything and I am sure she knew more about the country than did some who had been here many months or years. Her keen sense of humor was one of her many charms and she possessed the modesty of true knowledge.

Surely to live in the hearts of others is not to die.

MARION E. POLLOCK.

AT PLAY

The picture that comes most clearly before my mind of our dear leader and chief, after that of the superintendent and instructor, is Miss McIsaac "at play." It is said that those who work best and hardest also play hardest. This capacity was certainly hers, of enjoying very many things, her friends most of all, the fine ones, the odd and funny ones, each without a spirit of criticism but with keen appreciation for each true friend.

Surrounded by thirty or more of old and young Illinois Training School nurses, on a memorable picnic, or real lark, at the beach on her last trip to California, many of us learned to know the real woman who had time and capacity for every new impression. At this picnic, where sandwiches and funny stories were legion, she laughed so much that she begged us to stop, not the lunch, but the stories, that she might catch her breath. She swapped recipes with the married nurses and the young graduate found her a ready listener for her short but interesting history of life since training-school days. That saving sense of humor was displayed when a curious woman bystander asked if we might be a woman's suffrage crowd.

Each time we met her at one of her lectures and the impromptu reception that always followed, she was full of the last experience and had much to tell us of the wonders of our adopted California of which she was so fond, much that had not escaped her observant eyes.

I could go on and on remembering pleasant surprises in her dear nature, that grew broader, deeper and more wonderful as years added to her strength. All who knew her must have such treasured recollections that will be a lasting pleasure and help as long as memory lasts.

JANE H. POLLOCK.

AS SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ARMY NURSE CORPS

Isabel McIsaac, a native of the state of Iowa and a graduate of the Illinois Training School for Nurses, was appointed superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps on April 1, 1912. Miss McIsaac had been in close touch with the nursing organizations and training schools of the United States before her appointment and this familiarity with, and thorough knowledge of, the nursing conditions throughout the United States were invaluable in aiding her to obtain high class members of the nursing profession for the Army Nurse Corps. Therefore, when the Corps was increased from 125 to 150 in July, 1913, Miss McIsaac succeeded in very promptly providing for the increase. She was ever zealous in advancing the interests of the Corps, and it was with a great deal of regret that I received her resignation, which was to have taken effect October 1, 1914. Unfortunately her health, which had been uncertain for some time, necessitated her transfer to the Walter Reed General Hospital early in September. She died there September 21, and in her death the nursing profession lost a very valuable member.

W. C. GORGAS,

Surgeon-General, U. S. Army.

THE ARMY NURSE CORPS AND THE RED CROSS

The Army Nurse Corps and the Nursing Service of the Red Cross have met with a grievous loss in the recent death of Isabel McIsaac, superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps and vice chairman of the National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service.

During the Spanish-American war and while superintendent of the Illinois Training School for Nurses, Miss McIsaac was actively interested in securing nurses for service with the Medical Departments of the Army and Navy.

When the establishment of an Army Nurse Corps was contemplated, her advice and assistance were eagerly sought. She was among the first to recognize the importance of organizing an adequate nursing personnel for the American Red Cross and has given unsparingly of her time and strength in shaping the policies of this service.

She brought to her work a mature judgment, the highest of ideals and an absolute unselfishness which one can only regret as it prevented her last days being spent at the "Cranford" she longed for. Miss McIsaac had been failing all summer and was constantly urged by her friends to give up her position as superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps and go home for a complete rest. This she was unwilling to do until it was possible for her successor, Dora E. Thompson, to be relieved from duty as Chief Nurse of one of the military hospitals.

With the consciousness of her loss it is impossible to estimate her influence on the nursing profession or to render a suitable tribute to one who lived so nobly and still lives in the hearts of those who loved her.

JANE A. DELANO.

AS A FRIEND

For six years we worked together at the Illinois Training School and my recollections of Miss McIsaac are of a true and staunch friend and indefatigable assistant. With clear judgment, self-reliance, patience and above all, with a sense of humor, she was a companion and co-worker in a thousand.

As a superintendent, teacher, lecturer and writer, I do not attempt to speak. Her work is widely known; it is to the memory of my friend that I would offer a small tribute of affection. How many, I wonder, knew that she possessed a great musical ability, one of those talents necessarily sacrificed in a hospital career? But well do I remember the pleasure we had in buying a piano together for our very own, and how I loved to listen to her music in our rare moments of leisure. Books, too, she dearly loved and able were her criticisms on favorite authors and their works. Sentimentality she despised but sympathy she had in plenty for all oppressed.

To work on and to die in the harness is just what I expected of her. Uncomplaining, never seeking sympathy, she faced the enemy with the courage of her Scotch ancestors. She would "hate that death bandaged her eyes and forebore, and bade her creep past." No! without flinching she would go and so

O true, brave heart, God bless thee!
Wheresoe'er in His great Universe
Thou art today.

EDITH A. DRAPER.

TUBERCULOSIS NURSING AT THE EUDOWOOD SANATORIUM

By NANIE DE DION WILSON, R.N.

Towson, Md.

The world today is awakening to the great need of not only caring for those afflicted with tuberculosis but of training them to be able to educate others and thus in a measure control the disease the germ of which is carried in the sputum and is spread through general carelessness in living. We are therefore trying to establish in our tuberculosis sanatoria training schools for young women who have become arrested cases and who have sufficient education to take up nursing work. It enables them to continue taking the "cure" while they are having their two years' course in training. In turn, these nurses who pass in and out of our sanatoria from year to year, should be able to educate those people with whom they come in contact in their homes and places of business. Eudowood Sanatorium has a training school of this sort, situated in Maryland about seven miles from Baltimore. The altitude is something over five hundred feet above sea level. We have in our training school ten nurses, all young women who are arrested cases or who have sufficient resistance to be able to take up the work. The training school has graduated ten young women, of these two have married; six hold positions in tuberculosis institutions; and two are engaged in tuberculosis work as private nurses. The accompanying photograph shows those in training now. The two in white, having graduated this year, are holding positions at Eudowood under the Superintendent of Nurses. The course is for two years, including three months' probation. The nurses are on duty from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with three hours off duty each day and they have one afternoon a week for rest and recreation. They serve their time between the sanatorium, in which we aim to have incipient or early cases, and